



News Flash – PQRI Tool Kit Available

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is pleased to announce that the 2007 Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) Tool Kit is now available. To access the Tool Kit, visit the PQRI web page at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI> on the CMS website, then go to the PQRI Tool Kit section. To access all of the other resources you need to assist in successful reporting, go to the Educational Resources section of the previously mentioned website.

MLN Matters Number: MM5629

Related Change Request (CR) #: 5629

Related CR Release Date: June 29, 2007

Effective Date: January 1, 2006

Related CR Transmittal #: R1275CP

Implementation Date: October 1, 2007

Claims Processing Change for Services Submitted with the Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Modifiers QB or QU for Claims with Dates of Service On or After January 1, 2006

Provider Types Affected

Physicians submitting claims to Medicare Part A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs), or carriers for services rendered to Medicare beneficiaries in health professional shortage areas.

Provider Action Needed



STOP – Impact to You

For dates of service on or after January 1, 2006, when a modifier is required to bill for the HPSA bonus, use the **AQ modifier** for physician services provided in HPSAs. **Claims will be returned as unprocessable if submitted with the QB or QU modifiers, when submitted for dates of service on or after January 1, 2006.**

Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

**CAUTION – What You Need to Know**

Make certain that services eligible to receive a HPSA bonus for dates of service on or after January 1, 2006, are billed with the **AQ modifier, when a modifier is required.**

**GO – What You Need to Do**

Make certain that your billing staffs are aware of these changes.

Background

Under certain circumstances, it is necessary to include a modifier on a claim in order to receive a HPSA bonus payment. The QB and QU modifiers are the appropriate modifiers to be submitted for claims with dates of service prior to January 1, 2006. **The AQ modifier is the appropriate modifier to be used for dates of service on or after January 1, 2006.** Per direction from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), some Medicare contractors allow claims submitted with the QB and QU modifiers with dates of service on or after January 1, 2006 to be submitted and processed, though no bonus payment is made as the correct modifier has not been submitted. According to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations for transactions and code sets, as found in 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 160, providers must include valid codes and modifiers, as derived from the standard transaction code sets, on their incoming claims submitted to Medicare. Therefore, allowing claims with inappropriate modifiers to be accepted into the Medicare claims processing system constitutes a violation of the HIPAA standard transaction code sets.

In order to comply with HIPAA regulations and allow claims to be forwarded successfully to supplemental payers, **as of October 1, 2007, Medicare will no longer accept claims submitted with the QB or QU modifiers for invalid dates of service.** Claims must be submitted with the correct modifiers for the correct dates of service in order to be processed.

Additional Information

For complete details regarding this Change Request (CR) please see the official instruction (CR5629) issued to your Medicare carrier, or A/B MAC. That instruction may be viewed by going to

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R1275CP.pdf> on the CMS web site.

If you have questions, please contact your Medicare carrier, or A/B MAC, at their toll-free number which may be found at:

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<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS website.

Additional information on the HPSA bonus and the physician scarcity area bonus can be found at

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/01_overview.asp on the CMS website.

The Guide for Using the HPSA/PSA Web Page can be viewed by going to

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/Downloads/instructions.pdf> on the CMS website.

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